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Viewing cable 06CAIRO1696, THE SECOND U.S. - EGYPT CT JOINT WORKING GROUP

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06CAIRO1696**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06CAIRO1696	2006-03-19 15:04	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

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SIPDIS

FOR S/CT AND NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: THE SECOND U.S. - EGYPT CT JOINT WORKING GROUP

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Egypt hosted the second U.S.-Egypt Counterterrorism Joint Working Group on February 26, 2006. In a full day of talks, S/CT Amb. Crumpton and a six-member U.S. delegation discussed with the GOE's Inter-Ministerial Counterterrorism Committee the importance of a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to fighting terror. The GOE took the opportunity to assail the illegal-but-tolerated Muslim Brotherhood as "the mother of all terrorist groups" and cautioned against any dialogue with them. Both sides highlighted the challenge of the propagation of extremist ideologies on the Internet. The GOE affirmed its full commitment to combat terror finance and its integration into international mechanisms like the Egmont

group. The two sides discussed expanding technical cooperation, including a proposal by the ATA program for a U.S.-funded and administered project that would upgrade the GOE's operational CT capabilities. End summary.

Coordination and Cooperation Keys to Victory over Terror

¶2. (C) In the follow up to the inaugural session in Washington in July, 2003, The GOE hosted S/CT Ambassador Crumpton and a six member U.S. delegation for the second U.S. - Egypt Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (CT JWG) on February 26. The U.S. delegation, led by Amb. Crumpton, included NEA/ELA Deputy Director Stephanie Williams, Doug Rosenstein, Director of Anti-Terrorism Assistance in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Patrick Heffernan of the Treasury Department's Office of Global Affairs, Gershon Kieval of the National Counterterrorism Center, Michael Donovan of the Agency's Counterterrorism Center, and Patrick Worman of S/CT. Welcoming the U.S. delegation, Justice Minister Mahmoud Aboul Leil, Chairman of the GOE's Inter-Ministerial Counterterrorism Committee, affirmed that terrorism can not be eliminated through individual efforts. Cooperation and coordination, within and between governments, was the key to victory.

¶3. (C) Senior Justice Ministry Advisor and Member of Parliament Iskandar Ghattas noted that Egypt's Inter-Ministerial CT Committee had been founded in the wake of the Luxor massacre of 1997, Egypt's most heinous act of terror. The steady work of this committee, which includes the Ministries of Justice, Defense, Interior and Foreign Affairs, in addition to the Public Prosecution service, the General Intelligence Service, and State Security, proves the GOE's commitment to waging a continuous and sophisticated campaign against terror, Ghattas asserted. Egypt is currently a signatory to 12 multilateral CT instruments, Ghattas noted, adding that Egypt ratified in the past year the conventions for the suppression of terrorist bombings, the prevention of terrorist finance, and non-proliferation of nuclear fissile materials.

¶4. (C) Speaking on behalf of the USG, S/CT Ambassador Crumpton echoed Minister Aboul Leil's emphasis on cooperation and coordination. "Our partnership is more important than ever," he affirmed. In the war on terror, which could last for decades, an interdisciplinary approach, with close coordination among concerned entities, and between allied governments, would make the difference between success and failure. Amb. Crumpton cited two key elements of the U.S. CT strategy: attacking the leadership of terrorism groups and denying these groups safe havens.

Confronting Terror in the Region: The Egyptian View

¶5. (C) General Ibrahim Hammad of the Egyptian State Security Investigations Service (SSIS) took the opportunity of Egypt's briefing on regional and international terrorist activities to attack the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the political-social organization founded and centered in Egypt with branches and elements across the Middle East. In preface, Hammad observed that the core challenge in fighting terror in the region is ideological. Some groups maintain ideologies irreconcilable with modernity and the international order, Hammad asserted. Dialogue with extremist groups constitutes a reversal and a set back, he continued.

¶6. (C) The M is one such group, Hammad asserted, describing it as "the mother of all terrorist organizations." Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which assassinated President Sadat and the Egyptian Islamic Group, which was responsible for the 1997 Luxor massacre, both grew out of the MB, he charged. Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, convicted for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, had also been an MB, he added. "We now have more and more countries openly pursuing dialogue with

this group. This is a grave mistake," he asserted.

¶17. (C) (Comment: Hammad's presentation was an unsubtle message that the USG should not contemplate dialogue with the MB. We believe the GOE's enmity toward the MB is based more on its status as a political adversary than as a terrorist organization. In other contexts, senior GOE leaders have told us they do not/not believe the MB is involved in planning or execution of acts of terrorism. The GOE's tolerance of the MB, including the group's open if unofficial participation in the late 2005 parliamentary elections, which yielded 88 MB seats in the People's Assembly, belies its description of the group as a terrorist organization. That said, the GOE's assertion that the MB's ideology is starker than portrayed by some its spokesmen, and its description of the MB's role in promoting a general atmosphere in which extremism can grow, is well taken. End comment.)

¶18. (C) Moving on from the MB, Hammad said the GOE was gravely concerned by the challenges presented by the proliferation of extremist websites on the Internet. He acknowledged that Egypt was facing difficulty in adapting and responding to these new challenges that were consequences of rapid technological innovations. Terrorists are using the Internet to research plan and execute operations, he asserted. Hammad regretted the lack of international coordination and cooperation to quickly remove from the Internet extremist websites. "If we could shut these sites down we could reduce terrorist operations by 50 percent," he asserted.

Confronting Terror: U.S. Views

¶19. (C) U.S. delegation members from the National Counterterrorism Center and the Agency CTC provided a comprehensive overview, from the U.S. perspective, on active terrorist organizations, sponsors, safe havens across the greater Near East and South Asia region. Amb. Crumpton agreed with Hammad's identification of the Internet as a potentially lethal tool in the hands of terrorists. Agreeing that the Internet must be carefully policed and monitored, Amb. Crumpton noted that taking down extremist websites was not necessarily an effective tactic: Extremist groups are often able to restore websites or put up new ones within minutes.

¶10. (C) Cairo LEGAT affirmed the strong working relations and cooperation the FBI enjoys with Egypt's Ministry of Justice, the State Security Investigative Service, and the Egyptian General Intelligence Service. Exchanges of information and intelligence are frequent and routine, and requests for assistance quickly processed. Director Mueller's February visit to Cairo boosted an already strong relationship, and plans are underway for a very senior Egyptian security delegation to visit the U.S. to discuss deepening technical cooperation in areas like forensic capabilities and biometric data management.

Terror Finance

¶11. (C) Assistant Justice Minister Serry Siam, Chairman of Egypt's National Committee for Coordination to Combat Money Laundering, reviewed Egypt's efforts to fight terror finance in Egypt. Having ratified last year the latest UN Convention to Combat Terror Finance, Egypt has had a modern terror finance law on the books since 2002. The GOE maintains its own Financial Intelligence Unit, the Money Laundering Combating Unit of the Central Bank, which has links with counterpart units all over the world, including through the Egmont Group. Egypt will host the upcoming annual meeting of the Egmont Group in mid March (Note: The Egmont Group annual meeting is currently underway in Cairo and Egypt will also host a meeting in late March of the MENA region Financial Action Task Force and an outreach conference with private banking sector representatives at which the Ambassador will

speak. End Note).

¶12. (C) Echoing Gen. Hammad's anti-MB presentation, Siam asserted that the MB was implicated in terror finance efforts from the Balkans to Pakistan, and had a central role in the notorious Gulf-based Bank At-Taqwa. The bank has since been shut down, Serry observed, but its leadership has receded into the background.

Technical Cooperation: Anti-Terrorist Unit Proposal

¶13. (C) By mutual agreement, discussion of a new proposal by the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security was deferred until Amb. Crumpton's February 27 call on State Security Director General Hassan Abdel Rahman. Following a broader discussion of security ties and a readout of the JWG discussions with the SSIS Director, Amb. Crumpton invited Doug Rosenstein, Director of the DS Bureau's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program to propose a new initiative developed by his office. Rosenstein proposed that the USG partner with Egyptian security forces to develop a modern Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) that integrated intelligence gathering, assessment, and response capabilities in a comprehensive approach. The effort, fully funded by the USG, would involve the deployment of a full-time program coordinator who would integrate with the MOI and oversee allocation and management of resources in recruiting, training, and equipping the new team.

¶14. (C) Abdel Rahman responded favorably, if vaguely, to the proposal, stating that he was open to all forms of technical collaboration with the U.S., which he believed to be in both countries interest. However, in a follow-on meeting, Foreign Liaison Director General Wasfy Amer, told Rosenstein and D/RSO that Egypt already had a functioning Anti-Terrorist Unit and would prefer to focus on enhancing the existing unit's capabilities rather than building a new one from scratch. Both sides agreed to continue discussions on the issue.

Areas for Future Cooperation

¶15. (C) To close the JWG session, Minister of Justice Aboul Leil hosted a lunch for the U.S. delegation at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Club. Both sides agreed that there were a number of areas in which the U.S. and Egypt should work together in the following year:

- Countering the spread of violent ideologies, particularly on the Internet;
- Sharing information and coordinating policies on threats emerging from Iran, particularly in light of the current WMD standoff;
- Exploring areas for further technical assistance to the GOE, particularly regarding security at the Sinai/Gaza/Israel border and programs to upgrade Egypt's biometric data capabilities;
- Expanding law enforcement cooperation, to include possible exchanges between veteran U.S. police officers and Egyptian police departments;
- Increasing focus on MB-sponsored charities operating in the U.S. as possible terror finance channels.

¶16. (U) S/CT has cleared this message.
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